

Salisbury Cathedral Close Preservation Society

“ Rus In Urbe ”

Chairman: Sir Robin Ibbs, KBE
Vice-Chairman: John Wort, Esq
Acting Secretary: Penelope Ibbs

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Conservation Plan for the Cathedral and Close

The Conservation Plan for the Cathedral and Close continues to be a matter of great interest to the Society. We are eagerly awaiting publication of the Master Plan so as to learn how future intentions may impact on The Close. We understand that final decisions on the Plan have now been taken by the Chapter, and are told that the contents will be made known shortly – first to the Cathedral staff and then to other relevant groups, one of which will include representatives of the Society’s committee.

World Heritage Status

For some time, the Society’s committee has been considering what the advantages would be if the Cathedral and Close had World Heritage Status. A member of the committee has explored in depth the process involved in seeking this. Our view is that, in the long term, such status could be valuable; for example, if tastes and politics were to change, so that choices on what in this country should be preserved became sharper and more controversial, not having such status could be a disadvantage. We have let our view be known, including writing to the Dean, and were encouraged by her response. We were also particularly pleased that the Salisbury Civic Society chose World Heritage Status as the subject for open discussion at its recent Annual General Meeting.

Because many of the sites in the UK which have World Heritage Status are ecclesiastical, there may be an advantage in putting forward a proposition that contains a secular element. For example, this might be achieved by including Old Sarum and the Water Meadows with The Close and the Cathedral. That would be a unique, closely linked combination, extending over a long period of history, and would certainly be worthy of preservation. World Heritage Status is a subject which we shall continue to pursue.

Lights on the Broad Walk

In the last bulletin, attention was drawn to the need to replace the lights along the Broad Walk that had been destroyed by vandals. We are pleased to report that taller and more robust lights have been installed, and so far have not been damaged. There are fewer lights than before but the level of lighting seems adequate. A contribution of £1,500 to this project was made by the Society.

Although our funds are not large, we aim to make occasional contributions to expenditure that directly benefits The Close, particularly if it can tip the balance for desirable work that might otherwise not be undertaken.

Edwin Young Collection

The Edwin Young Collection is held at the Salisbury Library & Galleries and consists of about 400 watercolours and sketches, many of local scenes, including some of The Close. Edwin Young (1831-1913) was a Salisbury artist. Inevitably, his work is now showing signs of deterioration and steps need to be taken to conserve it. The Curator of the Collection has told us that efforts are being made to raise £50,000 for conservation costs, a key element being an application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. In view of the relevance of the Collection to The Close, the city and local history, the Society has sent a letter of support to the Curator.

Arundells

A notable event in The Close this year is the opening to the public of Arundells, the house on the West Walk where Sir Edward Heath lived. Members will recall that he was Patron of the Society. In his will, he expressed a wish that people should have the opportunity to go inside the house, see how he lived there, and view his pictures and other possessions. Planning permission has been granted for a period of three years for people to be admitted. The arrangements made for this are:

- Entry is limited to guided tours of no more than eight people; no more than two tours to be in the building at any one time, and only rooms on the ground floor to be shown. Afterwards, visitors are free to walk around the garden.
- Because of the limited numbers, booking in advance is encouraged, by phone or via the website (www.arundells.org) rather than turning up on the day.
- The opening period is Easter to September, starting this Easter Saturday, March 22nd. It is open for four days a week (Saturday to Tuesday) from 1.00-4.00 pm. The entrance fee is £5, with no concessions.
- Entry is through the northern of the two garages on West Walk.
- There is expressly no parking facility in The Close for visitors to Arundells.

The Society believes it is important that, at the end of the period for which planning permission has been granted, the house and garden should return to residential use. There are enough permanent museums in The Close already!

The Annual Lecture

This will take place on Monday, 10 November, at 6.30 pm, as usual in the Lecture Theatre of the Salisbury Museum. We are delighted to report that Arundells will be the subject this year. The lecture will briefly cover the history of the building, describe how it was used in Sir Edward's time, explain the steps that had to be taken to enable it to be open to the public, and describe experiences during its first season. It is our good fortune that the lecture will be given by Stuart Craven, who worked for Sir Edward for many years and has recently been in charge of the arrangements for opening Arundells to the public. He is the principal guide for parties visiting the house.

We believe the lecture will be of particular interest to members, and we look forward to welcoming many of them and their friends to this event.

Annual General Meeting of the Society

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Lecture Theatre of the Salisbury Museum at 6.30 pm on Monday, 28 April 2008. We hope that many members will attend, to question the Committee on any points of doubt, and to encourage us in our continuing efforts. The notice and agenda for the meeting is enclosed with this bulletin.